

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the precedents and privileges of the House.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL M. HONDA,
Member of Congress.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

VISA LOTTERY PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, in the news since Christmas Day has been great concern about the security of our country related to individuals entering this country and attempting to perpetrate harm on our citizens. It harkens back to September 11, 2001, and all the measures that we have taken since then to try to make our Nation a safer place.

One of the areas where we could make it much safer and much fairer for all of our citizens and for those who seek to come to the United States would be to eliminate the visa lottery program. This is a program that awards legal permanent residence status, or "green cards," to foreign nationals based on pure luck.

Literally, the State Department conducts a random lottery. Millions of people submit their names on very short forms, about a half-page long, and then they randomly select out of those millions of people 50,000 winners each year who get to enter the United States through the visa lottery program. They don't have to have any family ties to the United States. They don't have to have any job skills that are in need in the United States. They simply, through pure luck, get to enter this country.

Usually, immigrant visas are issued to foreign nationals that have existing connections with family members lawfully residing in the United States or with U.S. employers. However, under the visa lottery program, visas are awarded to immigrants at random without meeting such criteria.

A perfect example of the system gone awry is the case of Hesham Mohamed Ali Hedayet, the Egyptian national who killed two and wounded three during a shooting spree at Los Angeles International Airport in July 2002. He was allowed to apply for a legal permanent residence status in 1997 because of his wife's status as a visa lottery winner.

In fact, since this program was established in the early 1990s, nearly 1 million people have come into the United States regardless of the need for them to enter this country, regardless of the

unemployment rate, which today stands above 10 percent. And with 15 million Americans looking for work, we give 50,000 visas to people to enter the country not based upon any family ties, not based upon any job skills, simply based upon pure luck.

The State Department's Inspector General testified before Congress recently that it continues to believe that the program "contains significant risks to national security from hostile intelligence officers, criminals, and terrorists attempting to use the program for entry into the United States as permanent residents." With the tool of "legal permanent resident" status in hand, terrorists and spies would have free rein to travel and meet and plan terrorist activities within the borders of the United States.

Even if technical improvements were made to the visa lottery program, nothing would prevent terrorist organizations or foreign intelligence agencies from having members apply for the program who do not have criminal backgrounds, maybe have recently left one of the madrassas in the Middle East and have no record of having been affiliated with a terrorist organization, but that organization could assist them in submitting their names. And if they get a visa if their name is drawn, they don't just get a temporary visa like the 9/11 hijackers or the fellow who just attempted to blow up a Northwest airliner; rather, they get permanent residence status or a green card to live permanently in the United States.

Thirteen of the 14 countries over which the TSA is exercising greater scrutiny in the wake of the attempted Christmas Day bombing plot are eligible to participate in the visa lottery, including Yemen, which has become the focus of much activity on the part of terrorist organizations.

The visa lottery program is wrought with fraud. It is common for foreign nationals to apply for the lottery program multiple times using many different aliases. The State Department's Office of Inspector General declared in its September 2003 report that the visa lottery program is "subject to widespread abuse" and that "identity fraud is endemic, and fraudulent documents are commonplace."

A 2007 Government Accountability Office report found that the visa lottery program is vulnerable to fraudulent activity committed by and against applicants. The same 2007 report found that consular officers at six posts out of 11 reviewed reported that widespread use of fake documents, such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, and passports, presented challenges when verifying the identities of applicants and dependents.

The visa lottery program is unfair to immigrants who comply with United States immigration laws. Most family-sponsored immigrants currently face a wait of years to obtain visas, yet the lottery program pushes 50,000 random immigrants with no particular family

ties, job skills, or education ahead of these family- and employer-sponsored immigrants each year with no wait.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation should be overturned. I have introduced legislation to do just that. This Congress should bring it up for a vote.

There is a bipartisan effort to eliminate the visa lottery program. Forty-five bipartisan Members of Congress have already cosponsored this legislation, and it has twice passed the House: once under a Democrat majority in the 110th Congress as an amendment to the FY 2008 State/Foreign Operations Appropriations bill on the House floor and once in the 109th Congress as an amendment to H.R. 4437.

Democrat leadership this Congress blocked the same amendment from coming to the floor for a vote during the consideration of the FY 2010 State/Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. The Democrat-controlled House has not held a single hearing on the dangers posed by the visa lottery program during the 110th or 111th Congresses.

□ 1945

WE DON'T NEED MORE TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN; WE NEED A NEW STRATEGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the year 2009 ended 12 days ago, and many were glad to see it go. It was a very difficult year for American families as they struggled with the recession. It was also a very difficult year for our brave troops in Afghanistan. The death toll was 317. That was twice as many as the previous year, and it made 2009 the deadliest year of the war. We'd all like to believe that this year will be safer for our troops in Afghanistan, but it doesn't look like it will be that way. Our military leaders have already predicted that President Obama's decision to send 30,000 more troops will lead to an increase in violence this spring and summer.

Sadly, America's military families who have already sacrificed so very much must brace themselves for more as the attacks on our troops continue. Violent extremism is thriving in Afghanistan because of the crippled economy, the broken infrastructure, the lack of education and other social services, the breakdown in law and order, and the belief that the central government isn't doing nearly enough to help their people.

Mr. Speaker, there is no military solution to these problems. That's why I'm opposed to sending more troops to Afghanistan. We don't need new troops. We need a new strategy. We must start using the tools of smart security to improve the lives of the Afghan people and give them hope for a better future. One of the keys to this new strategy must be a civilian surge, a surge of experts and aid workers who can help the